



**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region V
POLLUTION REPORT**

Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2007

From: Brian Schlieger, On-Scene Coordinator

To: Ralph Dollhopf, US EPA
Jeff Roberts, City of Wixom
Gary Sharp, Independence Fire

Tom Krueger, US EPA
John Lipchik, City of Wixom

Subject: Initial
Wixom Nitric Release
48602 Downing Street, Wixom, MI
Latitude: 42.5061
Longitude: -83.5319

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:		Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	8/28/2007	Response Type:	Emergency
Completion Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
CERCLIS ID #:		Incident Category:	
RCRIS ID #:		Contract #	

Site Description

At approximately 1430 hours on August 29, 2007, a nitric acid spill was reported at the Tronex Chemical Company located in Wixom, MI. The spill occurred when an operator knocked the valve off the bottom of a 70% nitric acid tank. The tank then released the total contents (quantity unknown) of the tank out of the secondary containment, throughout the building, into the adjacent parking lot, and into a sanitary sewer.

The Wixom Fire Department and the Oakland County HazMat Team responded to the initial spill, which was reported as 400-500 gallons. Upon arriving at the scene, a red plume of nitric acid was documented leaving the building. Local responders established an initial evacuation zone of 1/2 mile around the incident. The nearest residential area is located approximately 1.5 miles from the incident. One company employee was treated for minor burns at a local clinic, and was transported to Ann Arbor for overnight observation.

Local responders entered the facility to inspect the situation and discovered 3-4 inches of liquid across the entire 16,000 square foot facility, and estimated the spill at 4-5,000 gallons. At 2130 hours, Oakland County HazMat requested USEPA assistance due to the magnitude of the spill. Three USEPA On-Scene Coordinators and 5 Weston START contractors initially responded to the spill.

The RP retained Inland Waters of Detroit, MI to conduct the clean-up actions. Initial reports indicated that the RP was hesitant to commit to complete clean-up actions. OSC Michelle Jaster and ORC Attorney Thomas Krueger spoke to the RP and his counsel on Wednesday August 29. All RP representatives continue to assure that they will be responsible for clean-up costs.

Current Activities

On August 28, 2007, EPA mobilized START to assist with air monitoring support and oversight of the RP's cleanup contractor. The City of Wixom, Oakland County HAZMAT, and multiple mutual aid fire departments were on-site.

START utilized a Drager pump with Nitric Acid tubes to check the air around the perimeter of the site along West Street and Wall Street. All locations resulted in non-detect. The Wixom Fire Chief reduced the evacuation zone to approximately 1/8 mile adjacent to the site in the early morning hours of Wednesday August 29. Three light industrial businesses were unable to open on Wednesday August 29.

START also checked the sanitary sewer manholes surrounding the site upon arrival. The two sanitary manholes closest to the facility had pH levels of 3 standard units. The grass located adjacent to the sanitary sewer resulted in a pH of 4 standard units. Other nearby sanitary and storm sewers had neutral pHs. Representatives from MDEQ's Surface Water Division and the City of Wixom Public Works Department oversaw sanitary sewer decon activities on Wednesday August 29. Contractors vacuumed out any free-standing liquids and prepared to flush the sewers.

Surface waters pooled along Dowling Street were also tested upon arrival, and pH results were all neutral. The pH in the decon area also tested neutral.

At 0245 on August 29, 2007, EPA and START observed liquid flowing from a hole in the east side of the building at approximately 3 gpm. The water was flowing south and collecting in a retention pond adjacent to the building. Dead grass was observed in this area, and the liquid had a pH of 3. Although the water had reportedly been turned off earlier in the evening, it is believed that this liquid was a combination of acid and water. The cause/source of the leak was unclear, but liquid migration ceased shortly afterwards.

START conducted multiple Draeger readings around and at the doorways of the building overnight on August 28/29. No elevated readings were detected.

START and the Oakland County HazMat Team conducted a level B entry into the site on the morning of August 29 in conjunction with increased clean-up contractor activities inside the building. Draeger tube results indicated the presence of nitric acid at levels ranging from 2-4 ppm in the breathing zone. Clean-up contractor activities were halted to adjust appropriate PPE levels.

Clean-up contractor activities were re-initiated in Level B PPE the afternoon of August

29. START, EPA and the Oakland County HazMat Team continue to provide air monitoring support inside and adjacent to the building. Current clean-up activities focus on excavating contaminated soils from the retention pond and decontaminating the impacted sewers in anticipation of a possible rain event this evening.

Planned Removal Actions

Remove gross soil contamination in retention pond and stage in roll-off boxes. Coordinate long term soil issues with MDEQ.

Move approximately 200 containers to outside of building in order to collect remaining free liquids trapped around containers.

Assess stability of the containers in order to ensure they were damaged by the spill or the fumes. Overpack any compromised drums.

Continue to decontaminate entire floor of facility.

EPA and START to continue to provide air monitoring and clean-up contractor oversight support in conjunction with the Oakland County HazMat Team. 24 hour operations are currently being staffed with personnel rotations.

Next Steps

Initiate discussions with RP, City of Wixom, and MDEQ regarding longer term plans for containers once they are assessed.

Key Issues

Clean-up contractor had initial problems with acquiring enough personnel in the overnight hours of August 28/29, but resource needs have been met for daytime operations on August 29.

Extreme temperatures and humidity levels have drastically decreased productivity today, especially given the increase to Level B PPE.

Local television and radio media were on-scene early on the morning of August 29. The City of Wixom has issued all official press statements regarding the incident.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
Intramural Costs				

Total Site Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

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